Phase III: The Scenarios

What emerges the in the following discussion is a dialogue that proceeds in a notably different manner from the dialogues up till now. This difference manifests itself in two ways: First, it becomes apparent that the overwhelming aspect of the subject at hand, that is, the examination of seven distinct virtual teaching scenarios, diverts a focused discussion and elicits threads of insight that are not altogether on topic. Second, the conversation registers a watershed of sorts in which participants air frustrations about both the lack of group engagement in the current TicToc project and the taxing demands associated with the fulfillment of that engagement. Many express frustrations over the fact that a technology conceivably designed to lessen work actually increases it, and increases it substantially. Although these threads might seem digressive, they actually contribute to the broader subject at hand by exposing unanticipated problems associated with the shift from a literacy-based culture to an electronic-based culture. The seven teaching scenarios that were to be the focus of this discussion are never fully taken up; however, other insights as to the pedagogical issues associated with them in general are. The majority of this discussion deals with the structure of online composition courses. Gian Pagnucci (3/11) begins this thread by observing that the seven TicToc scenarios tend to emphasize product-oriented methods of learning (methods that require work in the form of written text), rather than non-product-oriented methods of learning (methods that require work in the form of class discussion and verbal analysis). This insight prompts other members of the group to explore the fundamentally different aspects of literacy and electracy and how they impact the writing process. Joe Tabbi (3/11), for one, observes a distinctly organic element to online writing. He argues that the writing dynamic that occurs in electracy preferences an "improve-elaborate" methodology over the "compose-revise" methodology of standard textualization.

Date: Monday, 10 February 1997
From: Keith Dorwick
Subject: The teaching scenarios

First, I'd like to thank you all for your participation in the Tic-Toc Project; you're all busy people, and so it is gratifying to see you add to this conversation.

It is now time to move to a new phrase of the project — the discussion of the seven scenarios Jim Sosnoski and I have prepared for TicToc.

Let me begin by telling you the background for this: each of these scenarios (with one exception) represent courses that are part of the UIC catalog and that have been or could be taught at UIC in a virtual classroom. Jim Sosnoski and I used or modified syllabi from actual courses taught here at UIC or at Miami, Oxford while Jim was on faculty there.

The scenarios themselves are available on the Web at: http://www.uic.edu/depts/engl/ projects/tictoc/scenarios/scenario.htm and a summary follows.

These scenarios represent courses that might be offered by UIC's English Department, if in fact they were not already being offered, and each raises its own questions. Those problems, questions, and difficulties are the focus of the Tic-Toc Project. Put simply, what could an online course look like? How could it be designed? Who could teach it? How could the university determine compensation? How could quality control be maintained? (These are also the concerns of UI-Online, a project comprised of faculty and staff from all three campuses of the University of Illinois.)

The problem scenarios are:

1. a course taught only at UIC almost entirely online which does not meet in a regularly scheduled classroom. The associated course was English 214, Topics in Writing; the topic would be Scholarly Writing in Cyberspace.

2. a course team-taught in the English Department computer lab for credit in an English degree program almost entirely online by a team that consisted of a "content-professional" (i.e.,

Keith Dorwick: I never know just what to say in these things, but here goes.

The most important thing going on right now is eworks/my dissertation. The two of them are combined since eworks is the subject of my dissertation, but that phrase ("subject of my dissertation") seems to describe a traditional document, the kind I'd be able to drop off at the Graduate College, wipe the well-earned sweat from my brow, and print up new business cards with those magic letters, Ph.D.

However, in many ways, my dissertation is anything BUT traditional. First, it's a hypertext that I'm building on the World Wide Web which I hope to publish as a CD-ROM/book someday. Or

maybe just as a CD-ROM. It's also designed to be printed in and as text so that I can get it microfilmed for copyright and possibly publish it as a print artifact. (And so that the Graduate College doesn't have a collective heart attack.) You can see its current version at http://www.uic.edu/~kdorwick/dissertation.

In any case, the real dissertation isn't the text but the work—I'm helping to build eworks AS my dissertation, so that, in a real sense, I could point people to http://www.uic.edu/depts/engl to show what I think about electronic environments!

Meanwhile, I think it very good that I have a job, since I don't know how I'd do on a traditional market with such a radical "text." As of September 1, I will be one of the two Instructional Media Planners for the university. UIC hired me to help faculty integrate the use of technology in teaching.

I also do AIDS prevention: I visit a gay bathhouse once a week and talk to other gay men about how to avoid becoming HIV+ or what to do if they have already tested positive.

And meanwhile, my partner, John, puts up with me never being home, what with work, and an attempt at becoming ordained (ask me over drinks sometime and see http://www.uic.edu/~kdorwick/st-marks, the prototype of the website for my church!) and other volunteer work. We've been together 9 years as of last

a "faculty member") and by a "technological-professional" (i.e., a staff member from the English Department computer lab), and in which all of the content is technological and none of the content is about literary texts or about rhetoric. The course associated with this scenario was English 558, Topics in Language and Rhetoric; the topic was Introduction to Electronic Pedagogy.

3. a distance learning course in which a member of the English faculty taught in one of UIC's TV/Media studios and oversaw 25 adjuncts hired expressly for this purpose, and who were spread over the entire University of Illinois system. The adjuncts were scheduled into distance learning centers at Chicago, Urbana, Rockford, and Peoria, and each was responsible for four sections of 25 students. The course cap, therefore, was a total of 2500 students. The course used with this scenario would be English 242, The History of English Literature II: 1700-1900, a standard sophomore level survey course which would easily transfer to other universities.

4. a course team-taught online at UIC and at other universities in which the team members are employed by more than one university and in which students register for credit at their home university. The associated course was English 503: Theory and Practice of Literary Criticism, "The Age of Virtuality"

5. a course taught online at a university other than UIC where students register for credit to be applied to their degree programs at UIC. In this case, the test case was the equivalent of UIC's English 161, English Composition II, in which the course topic was civil rights.

6. a course taught online at UIC where students at other institutions receive credit from their home university. Here, the test course was English 581, Seminar in Literature and Related Fields, and the topic was "Cultural Studies, Postmodernism, and Cyberspace."

7. a course taught in a multimedia lecture hall which included Internet access, video and movie projectors, cassette players and other computer and audiovisual equipment. The course for this scenario was English 313, Major Plays of Shakespeare.

The above items were modified for the Tic-Toc project by James Sosnoski and Keith Dorwick from initial suggestions made by James Sosnoski in e-mail to the Wizards Team of e-works (Sosnoski). Each of these descriptions is then linked to the appropriate scenario. Additionally, there is a table that sums up each of the scenario, so that participants might compare their salient characteristics.

I will send each of the scenarios by separate cover to meet the needs of those participants who do not have access to the World Wide Web; however, participants ought to read the web versions if possible since most if not all of the scenarios include hypertext links to other materials, web pages, texts for the course, etc. The table will only be available to participants using the web, as it will not translate to e-mail.

I would suggest we discuss them in the following order:

1. *Courses already taught in a virtual classroom at UIC*: Scenarios 1, 2, 4, and 6 (Note: Scenario 4 was taught at Jim Sosnoski, then at Miami Oxford, and David Downing at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), but has not yet been taught at UIC in a virtual classroom.)

2. *Course that takes place at another university than UIC*: Scenario 5 (Note: our scenario here was in fact taught by Keith Dorwick at UIC; we are using it as an example of a course which could be taken by UIC students at other universities.)

3. *Courses NOT YET planned and scheduled to be taught in a virtual classroom or multimedia lecture hall at UIC*: Scenarios 3 and 7

If you have questions about this, please contact me; thanks!
    Keith

Date: Monday, 10 February 1997
From: Keith Dorwick
Subject: Levels of technological integration in the classroom

Claudine Keenan has identified three models for teachers who are interested in thinking through the problems that may surround the integration of computers into classroom teaching.
These are (in her words):

The Traditional Model

The Traditional model maintains all of the elements of the basic classroom: fixed and meeting time and place, traditional classroom (no computers), and the Internet is an additional resource for students to access on special trips to the campus computer lab, or on their own time. The Traditional model introduces the Internet to the class and directs them to explore it further as an alternate source of information for a specific assignment or a set of assignments. Smaller subsets of the Internet such as electronic mail, listservs, newsgroups, or bulletin board services, may alternately provide instructors in the Traditional model with a more manageable set of information than the World Wide Web. Ideally, the Traditional model incorporates several units of instruction on these technologies as appropriate complements to course materials.

The Transitional Model

The Transitional Model maintains the traditional elements of fixed meeting time and place, but that place may include regularly scheduled visits to the campus computer lab or an entirely computerized classroom. This model may also allow the instructor to eliminate space constraints by using electronic mail or chat software for asynchronous or synchronous exchanges, thus allowing students at remote sites to participate in the class. The Transitional model introduces and continues to explore Internet concepts during class time, and incorporates the Internet not only as a supplemental resource, but as an alternate delivery mode for instruction and collaboration. Instructors in the Transitional model may post course materials to a syllaweb or to a class listserv, and may also allow students to submit assignments over electronic mail or to collaborate with each other through synchronous conferencing software.

The Distance Learning Model

The Distance Model transcends traditional class boundaries by placing all materials, assignments, and resources on-line. Students do not meet in traditional class sessions; instead they exchange ideas and information entirely over the Internet, with possible exceptions for orientation sessions, office hours, or supervised examinations. The

Distance model introduces, explores, and relies upon Internet concepts for its success throughout the semester. This model allows the students self-paced instruction and individualized attention through electronic mail, listservs, newsgroups, and synchronous conferencing, either on a local area network or in a Multi-User Domain. Distance Instructors may also use Real-time video transfer over the Internet, which is quickly becoming more accessible to teachers and students for distance education, with some system add-ons available for under $100 per user. In conjunction with satellite capabilities, instructors in the Distance model may exploit the Internet's "learn anytime, anywhere" to its fullest potential. Students may participate from virtually any geographic location, at any time, using these technologies.

Work Cited:
Keenan, Claudine. An Educator's Guide to the Internet.
http://cac.psu.edu/~cgk4/design.html#models. August 2, 1996
Keith

Date: Thursday, 13 February 1997
From: Ken McAllister
Subject: Teaching scenario #1

Greetings Everyone!
Well, Keith has given us all plenty to look at, but don't worry if you haven't yet had time to read through all the scenarios. For now, I'd like to suggest that we follow Keith's recommendation and first discuss Scenarios 1, 2, 4, and 6. We need not discuss these all at once, and in fact, I'd like get things started again by calling our attention to scenario 1, a Virtual Writing Course, which is offered only to UIC students, is taught almost entirely online, and does not meet in a regularly scheduled classroom.
Since this first group of scenarios, including the first one, consists of virtual or semi-virtual courses that have been taught at UIC or IUP, I'd like to ask the designers of those courses (Keith Dorwick, Jim Fletcher, Jim Sosnoski, David Downing) to remain in the background of these conversations for awhile longer so that the rest of us might try to:

Predict the Future by Answering the Following Questions

- What problems do you imagine the Virtual Writing Course (Scenario 1) would raise for its instructors?
- What problems do you imagine the Virtual Writing Course (Scenario 1) would raise for its students?
- What problems do you imagine the Virtual Writing Course

(Scenario 1) would raise for support staff?
- What problems do you imagine the Virtual Writing Course (Scenario 1) would raise for departmental and university administrators?

After we've heard from our participants, whom I hope will speak out of both experience and speculation when possible, I'll invite David, Jim F., Jim S., and Keith to tell us about how these courses worked out for them as instructors, for their students (based on course evaluations), for support staff (if they have a conception of that perceptive), and for administrators (as they experienced any feedback from that level).

In asking the questions above, I hope we'll discover whether or not a common body of knowledge exists concerning the design and implementation of a virtual course. Are there pedagogical, organizational, or administrative components that most of us recognize as being problematic? If so, are there solutions or work-arounds to those problems that many of us also know to be effective?

Once we have a better conception of the extent to which our techno-pedagogical insights are shared, it's my hope that our subsequent conversations about virtual-courses-to-be (i.e., Scenarios 3, 5, and 7) will be constructed with the benefit of such insight behind them. If we discover, for instance, that our insights and estimations of actual virtual courses (so to speak) differ substantially, then I suspect our subsequent lines of wondering, as Bill Covino might say, will emphasize certain components of the educational process (e.g., the instructor's ethos or administrative resistance) that might not come into the foreground under other, perhaps opposite circumstances.

One of the primary goals of the TicToc Project is to begin to develop sets of working solutions to problems that occur in the construction of virtual courses, virtual departments, and eventually, in virtual universities. The first set of these recommendations and solutions ought now to begin circulating here in the TicToc Conversations; these recommendations will later be formalized in our TicToc Symposium, and after that in the next issue of *Works & Days*. Subsequent conversations will add new sets of solutions and modify old ones; hopefully, these conversations will never stop.

For now, though, let's get started again!
Keith.

Date: Friday, 14 February 1997
From: Paula Mathieu
Subject: Problems associated with scenario #1

I would like to start the ball rolling discussing scenario one. It's an

interesting and quite different course than anything I've taught before, so I really have to stretch to get my mind around it.

FOR STUDENTS: One potential problem I see is a sort of divided class based on skill level: those who have to attend, and those technologically skilled enough (and presumably with personal Internet access) to stay at home. It seems to privilege students with access over those without, in terms of convenience. I wonder how that divided class plays out in terms of building a community. It seems there might be alliances or resentments fostered outside of the online world that get carried to that online setting. I'm thinking that if I had to go to the computer lab every day and other folks never had to attend, I'd be a bit annoyed. Also, what about the student who isn't wired or competent enough never to attend but skilled enough not to need the constant teacher/lab experience. Does the attendance policy allow for flexibility in those cases?

FOR STAFF: At this point, at UIC at least, I can't imagine that many of these courses are feasible, given the amount of public labs available to English department folks. If one course is taught exclusively in a lab, that means other "more traditional" courses would have no access to computer labs at that time. How would it get determined who gets to use a lab and when?

FOR TEACHERS: I'm curious to know about how someone gets to know students online. Not to sound paranoid, but if you never meet the student after the first day, how can you judge it's he or she doing the writing? I'm sure senses of these people and communities form in a different manner, but I don't have a clear idea what that looks like.

FOR ADMINISTRATORS: For the department head, what makes this an English course? Or for the comp administrator, how are issues of writing process handled? Other than being a technological facilitator, what is the role of the teacher?

Paula

Date: Friday, 14 February 1997
From: Bob Goldstein
Subject: Response to Mathieu

> >I'm thinking that if I had to go to the computer lab every day and
> >other folks never had to attend, I'd be a bit annoyed. Also, what
> >about the student who isn't wired or competent enough never to
> >attend but skilled enough not to need the constant teacher/lab
> >experience

To my thinking, just the contrary. If I had the appropriate skills to allow me to do the work from home, particularly when the nature of the course is designed for it, I'd really resent having to come to a lab

just because some classmates haven't got their skills together. It's not just convenience — sparing me the commute, allowing me to work odd hours when the lab might be closed or when I'm in the mood, will let me produce higher quality work.

Besides, what kind of message are we sending to the less-skilled students? "Don't worry, because even if you had the skills, we would-n't let you use them." ?

Sure, I think it's important to provide technical access to those who can't provide their own, and to provide technical training to those who don't have the skills yet. But equally important is to let each student reach as far as he can. And not just for the students' sake — society needs high achievers as much as it needs equal access.

Sorry for the diatribe, but I have kids in public schools, and this hits a little too close to home. I get tired of the confusion between quality and equality. They are related, to be sure, but they are not the same. I like to think I benefit from the education of other people's kids, but not all taxpayers see it that way.

Bob

Date: Saturday, 22 February 1997
From: Virginia Wright Wexman
Subject: Intellectual property rights

Before we get too deeply into a discussion of the wonderful courses we can imagine on-line, I want to remind everyone that what we can or can't do will be importantly decided by the US congress when it considers appropriate legal guidelines governing the fair use of these materials. Those of us in media studies have already been subjected to a good dose of the unco-operative, bullying tactics that US infotainment conglomerates like Disney and Time-Warner try to extend their intellectual property rights in such materials as far as they possibly can. Even when the positions of the media barons clearly flaunt existing legal guidelines, the threat of a costly lawsuit backed by a dream team of highly paid Hollywood lawyers is enough to terrify most universities and presses. Because such conglomerates now own many of the textbook houses, they will be infringing on our fair rights usage more and more. Fortunately, the recent meeting in Geneva on international copyright guidelines for on-line and multimedia materials produced a qualified victory for public interest advocates such as the American Library Association,

> **Virginia Wexman:** As a person whose specialty is media studies, I should know more about electronic networks than I do. I'm hoping the tictoc project can teach me.
>
> My academic degrees are from the University of Chicago, and I'm currently a professor of English at the University of Illinois at Chicago. My most recent book, *Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage and*

Hollywood Performance, was published by Princeton in 1993. In addition to writing on film, I've also written on television. My current book project, *Compromising Positions: Hollywood Directors and the Construction of Authorship* will include a final chapter on authorship and new media forms. In addition, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Consortium of Chief Administrative Officers of the American Council of Learned Societies, I'm involved in planning ACLS programs on distance learning, electronic networks for the American Council of Learned Societies, and the College Art Association, who had previously held a series of meetings to develop guidelines for fair use that took account of the needs of scholars and of the public at large. (The group called itself CONFU: the conference on Fair Use.) In Geneva, the CONFU group managed to hold the line on fair use—for the moment. But this David-and-Goliath battle between CONFU and the Hollywood super-lawyers will be replayed when the question of signing on to the Geneva accord comes up in the US Congress. And the lawyers and lobbyists (most prominently represented in Washington by Jack Valenti) will not be caught unaware by the degree of sophistication and organization of the CONFU folks a second time. They will fight very hard to shut down fair use altogether. That is their goal.

   Why am I telling you this? Because, as arcane and boring as these questions seem to us, we must, as far as possible, try to remain alert to them, give all possible support to the institutions that are fighting to keep fair use alive, and be ready to write to congresspeople when the issue comes up there. We also need to insure that users of such materials, not just owners, are represented in congressional hearings on this issue. (In the past, virtually everyone who has testified before congress has represented the interest of owners, not users). We have an enormous amount at stake here: namely, the future of on-line and multimedia teaching options.

   I have a copy of the latest CONFU guidelines which, though not ideal, are the best statement we are likely to get on this important issue. I'll be happy to send them to anyone who wants them.

   Virginia

Date: Sunday, 23 February 1997
From: Ann Feldman
Subject: Characterizing the learning of online classrooms

   I've just looked at the materials on the web and I'm very impressed (although I find the bright blue against green a little hard on the eyes) with the layout and the information provided. I have a different response to this course than Paula's. I'm itching to see what students

David Seitz: Scene One (1971). After having moved from Roosevelt NJ—a town with progressive politics originally formed by Jewish garment workers as a cooperative under the New Deal—to Wilkesbarre PA—a conservative city known for anthracite coal mining, I am appalled at the corporal punishment sanctioned in my fifth grade classroom. With the help of my academic dad and his department's ditto machine, I write and print up an "underground newspaper" protesting these policies and distribute them on the playground. The principal doesn't know what to make of this.

Scene Two (1994). I am sitting on the Chicago El traveling through Uptown, annotating bell hooks' essay, "Reconstructing Black Masculinity" for a graduate class in film reception. It says, "contemporary young black males espousing a masculinist ethic are not radicalized or insightful about the collective future of black people." I am sitting next to a young black male with rap music turned up on headphones, looking every bit like hooks' case. I want to ask him what he thinks of this. I think of all the worlds and spirits that academic theory can't encompass. I think about what I don't know.

Like some others on TicToc, I am a doctoral candidate in Language, Literacy and Rhetoric at UIC. My work here tends to grow from moments of politicized hubris and humility like the ones above. Among other stuff, just before coming to UIC, I worked with mothers of Headstart children in a family literacy center. These relationships led me to research their oral performances and literacy values, looking at their dream narratives and ghost stories. Also, with the help of some academically successful Latino students, I wrote on their issues of acculturation and identity negotiation. These kinds of concerns led to my dissertation work, an ethnographic study of how primarily working-class undergraduates of various cultural backgrounds respond to a critical agenda in a composition course.

While I admit economic necessity dri-

actually produced. The fascinating question that I bump up against is, "How can we characterize the learning/meaning-making that goes on in this course?" Some might ask what's the content of the course, but that takes my question in a different direction, perhaps assuming that we have a finite amount of stuff (usually canonical) in the undergraduate curriculum that must be passed along. I tend to think in terms of processes and participation. What community are the students joining? What does participation in this community mean? How is it characterized? How is one's identity transformed by such participation? Now, with these questions in mind, how do we approach the term scholarship?

Ann

Date: Monday, 24 February 1997
From: David Seitz
Subject: Questions of legality

Virginia (and all interested others),
This is actually a short addendum to your critique and call to point out other sources to inform and organize. For those specifically in Comp. studies, this may be redundant, but nevertheless purposeful.

In the October 1996 issue of *College Composition and Communication* (*CCC* 47.3 October 1996), Andrea Lunsford and Susan West provide a thoughtful summary of all the key issues in conflicts of "intel-

ves my learning about technologies and teaching, I do want to bring issues of non-mainstream literacies to the technological interface for future research. I'm sure my perspectives will come out in the conversations.

On much lighter side:

Like Randy Bass, I too have a two-year-old Eli, as well as another child expected in June. I share parenting half time with my wife Daniele, an early childhood teacher. So I am well versed in making ice-cream pizza rocks, joining an improvisation of "Where the Wild Things Are," or hopping on any imaginary train, plane, bus, or elevator at a moment's notice. Although time was once spent at movies, concerts—mostly harder edges of folk musics, and various

lectual property". For those who didn't read it, I highly recommend it. In their endnotes, they cite several web sites where people can go to better understand what's at stake and help organize for upcoming actions at various levels. Enlisting the efficiency of technological immediacy in the name of activism, I have listed those urls and listserv below:

- Digital Future Coalition, organized to collectively express concerns about the proposed Copyright Protection Act of 1995: <http://www.ari.net/dfc>
- CCCC Caucus on Intellectual Property: <http://www.Geocities.com/Athens/3375>
- Listserv for the Caucus: CCCC-IP@tc.umn.edu

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David

Date: Monday, 24 February 1997
From: Mick Doherty
Subject: Issues of ownership

Speaking of Lunsford & West, they collaborated with Michael J. Salvo and Rebecca Rickly to author a webtext entitled "What Matters Who Writes? What Metters Who Responds?" in the inaugural issue of *Kairos* last year. It is a hypertextual foray into examining issues of ownership in the writing classroom, and a marvelous read: http://english.ttu.edu/
kairos/1.1/features/lunsford.html

Rumor has it — unconfirmed, unsubstantiated — that a forthcoming issue of *Kairos* (though not the one due out in two weeks) will have a metatext entitled "Ma and Pa Kairos Teach Andrea Lunsford Hypertext," with the aforementioned Salvo and Rickly in the Ma & Pa roles. But this is only hearsay . . .

Mick

Date: Sunday, 9 March 1997
From: Ken McAllister

Subject: An appeal for participation

The original idea behind The TicToc Project was to catalyze a controlled detonation of what many of us in the profession (staff, faculty, students, administrators) agreed is a cultural and economic bomb that will explode soon or later. In the shock waves that radiate outward from the explosion there will be inevitable casualties: teachers who didn't learn how to teach in cyberspace and so were not (re)hired, students who couldn't afford the technology necessary to keep up with an increasingly technophilic academic environment, staff who lost jobs to automation, administrators who made the wrong decisions in trying to balance their institutions' technological and human resources.

Steve Cisler, the director of the Apple Computer's Library of Tomorrow Program, calls this process "disintermediation . . . removing skilled people from a process because their knowledge or craft is thought to be replaceable by a machine or automation program."

The scenarios that we've been shown on this list, but ideally consulted on the TicToc web page, exhibit disintermediation, and in fact, Claudine Keenan's three models for how technology may be used pedagogically implicitly confirms that disintermediation within our institution is inevitable.

We all know what happened when those early 19th-century weavers of Nottinghamshire (Luddites) were disintermediated.

And yet we're all so quiet now.

Keith.

Date: Monday, 10 March 1997
From: Thomas Philion
Subject: Demands of technology

Ken: thanks for your message. I'm reading it about 12 hours after you sent it, in the middle of the morning, when I really should be in bed snoozing. But if I am ever to respond to your messages, I have to respond at this time, or not at all.

I appreciate your not so subtle request for more conversation. Let me try to explain my own silence.

Basically, I have found it difficult to respond to your prior messages for two reasons. The most obvious to me is that I have been just too plain busy to commit the sort of serious time and attention to them (your messages) that they deserve. In a presentation that I made with you earlier this semester (or was it last year?) on the e-works project, I made the point that getting involved with technology in teaching and learning adds to (does not decrease) the amount of work that we do as academics. I mean, I do this technology stuff (participating in this

listserv, building my web site, etc.) in addition to everything else that I do (write essays, teach, advise, etc.). Initially, when I first became interested in using computers in learning and teaching (a time that corresponds closely with the invitation to participate in this project), I wasn't aware of the way in which my interest in computers would increase my responsibilities and demands upon my time. I was caught up in the emotion and intellectual excitement of developing new habits of thinking and teaching and learning. Now, however, I find that I have reached the point where I feel pulled in too many directions. I have an essay due in another week or so; I'm trying to teach well in my various classes; I'm trying to give my kids and my wife the time and attention that they deserve. My point is, I think we all have to be aware of the way in which computers change the conditions of our learning and teaching (they make us more accessible to students and to others; they increase the amount of time we spend in literacy education—computer literacy education, that is). Someday, I assume (or hope), I'll get to a point where I can better manage and anticipate the responsibilities that flow from my interest in computers. For now, though, I'm mostly aware of how my interest in and use of computers complicates and adds to my workload, rather than simplifies and reduces it.

The second reason that I didn't respond to your prior messages about the teaching scenarios is that I instinctively draw back from the sort of thinking that your prompts require. In other words, I have trouble thinking "futuristically" or in a de-contextualized manner. I get the sense that you are asking me to play "games," to see if I can predict accurately the sort of problems that Keith and Jim and maybe others experienced in the course of their teaching with computers. I might be too "nuts-and-bolts" in my approach to life and learning, but I'd much rather see Keith and Jim and others write about difficulties that they are experiencing now (or have experienced in the past) in teaching with technology. There is a lot that I could say myself about that matter, but I'm afraid that the requests to anticipate the future don't allow for that sort of inquiry (my larger argument here is that getting into the local, the here and now, is perhaps the best way to think through the issues that your futuristic scenarios raise).

One final idea before I am off to bed: I wonder about this metaphor of the "controlled detonation." I mean, I can appreciate it, and certainly appreciate the way in which the arrival of computers "detonates" changes in the world (my comments above are one response to a "detonation," aren't they?). On the other hand, I don't care much for this notion that computers are an "economic and cultural bomb." I mean, the metaphor suggests a lack of agency; bombs typically come from somewhere way above, without our actually asking for them (or want-ing them). As my account above suggests, people often desire technology, or what they think technology can provide them

with. They ask for it directly, and chase it down until they get it. Another way to envision computers is to see them as "seductive" in nature, as "seducing" many people into exploring ideas and situations that they necessarily do not fully understand or appreciate. If "violence" occurs in the course of this process of acquisition and exploration, I suspect that it has as much to do with the assumptions that people had in the first place about technology and what it would do for them, as with the nature of the technology itself, or its "impact" upon them.

I hope this is clear—it's really late in the evening. I look forward to reading responses and further conversation.

Tom

Date: Monday, 10 March 1997
From: Virginia Wexman
Subject: Rewards for tech-related work

I have to agree with Tom about the difficulties many of us are facing about time. Also, I am not at all convinced that any faculty will be penalized because they haven't jumped into computerized learning. On the contrary, as Tom suggests, they may be penalized if they do because it will take time away from their "serious" scholarship. In the past I myself have used up enormous amounts of time—not to mention my own money—making educational videotapes, helping students to make their own videos using university equipment, making frame enlargements for teaching and research, making tapes of film clips, learning how to use the multimedia classrooms, and other such projects. I have never had the slightest hint that the university gave me any credit at all for any of these activities. On the contrary, the university has repeatedly engaged in a pattern of creating, abandoning, and recreating units to assist and take a leadership role in such endeavors—and hiring and firing the people who run them and work in them. Are our teaching awards ever given to people who have pioneered in this area? Are our promotion and tenure committees impressed with it? I'm not complaining about my own situation—I've done these things because I've been interested in them, and I never expected to be rewarded by the university. But Ken's suggestion that Luddites will fail in our university is exactly wrong: Luddites rule our university. It is a very conservative institution. (With apologies to Gene Ruoff, who is doing an excellent job; I hope you don't get fired, Gene.)

Virginia

Date: Monday, 10 March 1997

From: Gene Ruoff
Subject: Response to Wexman

   Thanks, Virginia. I also hope I don't get fired, or at least get a good exit package. But a few remarks on the conservatism (traditionalism?) of the institution. So far as Virginia's concerns are so feelingly described, they are true enough. The problem is that the people who run the university in these areas are the faculty, and traditionalism is strongest, for good or ill, at the department and college levels. Nominations for teaching awards originate from departments. Promotion and tenure recommendations originate from departments. Recommendations for salary increases . . .,. etc. Resistance to the ITIP initiative that distributed all the new networked computers to the faculty came not at the campus level but from some of the college offices.
   It was not Luddism that led the Library to set up the Info Aracades or the Computer Center to start the Instructional Technologies Lab or Academic Affairs create the multi-media lecture rooms and to fund two new positions for instructional designers this year. Nor was it contempt for our instructional mission that led the provost to establish the new program to reward faculty for documented excellence in teaching. My sense of things is that departmental culture rules much more of the university's rewards systems (such as it is) than most of us care to think.
   Gene

Date: Tuesday, 11 March 1997
From: Virginia Wexman
Subject: Response to Ruoff

   Yes, it's true, Gene. The faculty (we) are a conservative lot when it comes to new ways of doing things. It has certainly been the case that part of the reason so many of the facilities designed to offer innovative technical support to faculty have been shut down in the past is because so few of us made use of them.
   I'm curious: does anyone know if other universities have tried outsourcing such facilities? I'm not sure what difference it would make, but I'd like to know.
   Virginia

Date: Tuesday, 11 March 1997
From: Gian Pagnucci
Subject: Virtual learning as product-oriented

I noticed in the scenarios (and there were a lot, so probably most people are just now getting to look at all of them) that one of the common themes was having classes that focused on work. What I mean is, in many classes, especially writing classes, we do a lot of discussing of literature or writing process or social topics or what have you. We talk a lot, but we don't necessarily do a lot of work. We might free write for a few minutes, but then we spend the bulk of our time talking about this writing. So the work is secondary. Even class papers are usually written outside of class and only discussed and revised in class.

This is not a criticism, entirely. I've used that approach myself for several years and it is a far cry better than one person (the teacher) doing all the lecturing.

But it seems to me that as we move to virtual classes, a new possibility opens up for redefining what it means to be in a class. Suddenly, we can have writing classes where we mainly write rather than talk about writing. Naturally, this is still a process that will mean we need discussion and collaboration, but the focus shifts to doing something with that talk. We aren't just talking because that's what we do in classes. Instead, we are talking because we need to talk in order to do our work.

For me, this also means getting back to more of a writing workshop approach. So I find I now spend time, when this approach actually works, which isn't always, talking about how to solve problems. How do I word this? How do I put in this picture? How do I see my web page? How do I address this letter to parents? Who is my audience?

I like to believe all of this makes our talk of writing more concrete, more meaningful because the class is now situated in a real context.

So I get excited when I think that in cyberspace, we can not only do work, but do work that contributes to building a whole society. So instead of writing a few papers for a class, I might be writing papers that become part of something larger.

That's where I really need some help. Just what might we start building together? What exactly would it be?

And can I get my students at IUP working with your students at

Gian Pagnucci: I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Indiana University of Penn-sylvania. I teach seminars on technology and literacy, technical writing, composition pedagogy, and reading theory for the department's Rhetoric and Linguistics Graduate Program. My current research has been exploring the intersections of technology and literacy, particularly through narrative methods of understanding. I have published scholarly work in *English Journal*, NCTE's *The Astonishing Curriculum*, and *Flexible Learning in Action*. Two forthcoming articles will appear in *Theory into Practice* and NCTE's *The Journal Book for Technical and Professional Programs*. I have also published a number of poems, stories, and technical manuals. Given a choice, though, I would love to be a script

some other school? In fact, could we start to break down the barriers between institutions? Maybe quit competing and work to make something new?

Ok, this may be a bit long to get discussion going, but somebody must have a few thoughts on this. Fire them off, ok? I've got this big bucket of cement that can only sit here going unused for so long. Ciao,
  Gian

Date: Tuesday, 11 March 1997
From: Joe Tabbi
Subject: The fundamental differences of virtual composition

Thanks for directing discussion back to the classroom, Gian. I've been meaning to go back to those scenarios, study them, and say something relevant to advance the discussion. Sure, I've been busy like everyone else, but I don't think that's all that's kept me from returning to the subject. That kind of reference, with an assigned text that everyone can go back to and cite, is something I do all the time with printed works. It makes for a textual experience that can be shared by a group of more or less like minded people (in a classroom, for example, or in a discussion group, or among friends talking attentively about books). That's an aspect of print textuality that I find valuable; it's crucial, I think, to creating various sorts of communities, academic and otherwise. I'd hope that such values will be preserved in the new media.

Still, in this case, something keeps me from going back, even though I know exactly where I filed the relevant posts. Most of my posts to this list have not been considered evaluations of a fixed text, but rather immediate responses to a particular post, or to a series of posts that have achieved some conversational momentum. That achievement implies a different rhythm of composition. In print communications (even typed letters), my model tends to be along the lines of "compose-revise," and I tend to bring other texts into my own through direct citation; here it's more like "improve-elaborate": less a "process" that moves through successive drafts than a participation in a discussion whose terms and parameters are always changing (but returning, periodically, to certain terms of agreement and points of contention).

The idea that electronic environments might allow for more writing in class is one that I hope gets more attention here. I'd like to hear from people in rhetoric and composition: if you folks can agree that the medium discourages "process" approaches to teaching writing (can we agree on that?), what sorts of assignments/class-work might be adaptable to these more collaborative sorts of writing. Gian men-

tions the "writing workshop" approach, which puts the work in a "real context" and focuses on solving problems. This seems too goal-oriented to me, not focused enough on the actual problem of composing sentences and developing ideas. Why must one solve a "real" problem for writing to be "concrete"? There's plenty of concrete resistance in words, and in how they are assembled in the act of composition. Bringing in real-life problems may seem more "relevant" to students is not necessarily relevant to the subject at hand: which is writing. I don't necessarily want student papers to become anything "larger" than that, especially.

But I do believe the medium puts at our disposal lots of ways to develop self-consciousness in students about the act of composition. So, again, I'd like to hear more about particular assignments, that allow students to do things with words more readily than they could be done without electronic mediation.

Joe

Date: Wednesday, 12 March 1997
From: Greg Ulmer
Subject: Distance education and social ecology

Hi Gian

Your question about breaking down the barriers across institutions as a consequence of interactive computing in education is on target. I am leaving tomorrow for a f2f conference so I cant say much about it now, but it will be the focus of my position paper. the gist is: it takes a village to educate a distance learner. Or, you could say, when we start learning "remotely," the village will get educated.   My take on the scenarios is that they are fine as representations of the first stage of DE, in which it is assumed (for convenience sake) that only one variable changes (the channel of communication, and then maybe the pedagogy).   I will recommend that we consider these scenarios more holistically, in an info-ecology, and ask what is happening with these technologies in other institutions, and how might the interactive capabilities o these tools support new kinds of relationships society wide. This approach is motivated by the history of writing, which shows that literacy is an apparatus, meaning that it is a *social* machine including institutional practices and identity behaviors as well as tools. I am speaking now of the long range vision that could be guiding our plans, even if the short range implementation has to be lit more than a literal translation of pre-electrate, literacy-specific forms into the new technology.

best,
Greg

Date: Wednesday, 12 March 1997
From: David Downing
Subject: New challenges associated with virtual learning

David Downing: I've been enjoying reading the autobios as they've been coming in, and when I read Dave Coogan's remark about staring into the monitor, I could certainly relate to the experience. It has made me recall some of the discussions Jim Sosnoski and I had when we were in the early stages of designing the Cycles project, and how one of our initial protocols for every project was for all the participants to introduce each other by using these autobios. Our intention was to acknowledge right off that collaborative intellectual work is first of all between and among persons, not just ideas and texts. I'm determined to make this an autobio, though, not just an essay on autobios, so here goes:

For the past several years, I've been collaborating with Jim Sosnoski on several projects involving more and more use of cyberspace. For those of you who have also worked with Jim, you know that collaborating with him is always more like a journey, an exploration, or an experiment than just completing an assigned task or co-authoring an article. Which is what makes it interesting and exciting and rocky at times because not every experiment works. But those that do have often been quite wonderful, as when Jim and I taught an online teleseminar linking our two gaduate classes at (then) Miami U and IUP. Or in some of our co-authored publications where we've experimented with dialogical formats and the inclusion of graphic elements (such as Jim's cartoons—see our "Protocols of Care in the Cycles Project," in *Journal of the MMLA*, Spring, 1994). Or (and this is most pertinent to the TicToc Project), our re-designing *Works and Days* around collaborative projects exploring the impact on our profession of the telecommunications revolution.

I'll jump in here because the threads of the last few posts touched a resonant chord with me, beginning with Tom Philion's point about the demands of cyberspace in addition to all our print/disciplined work, and resonating with Gian's comment about work and Joe's articulation of the differences he experiences between the "compose-revise" process of print writing to the "improve-elaborate" activity of online dialogues. Much of the work Jim Sosnoski and I have been doing over the past several years involves classroom experiments moving between the disciplinary, print environment and the post-disciplinary, electronic environment. When we set up the new series of *Works and Days*, we tried to lay out some of these differences in our introduction to the 1994 "Geography of Cyberspace" issue. We tend to work in a kind of hybrid situation where we're part in one world, part in the other. In fact, the Cycles projects, such as TicToc, involve just such hybrids of electronics and print productions, online and f-2-f symposiums. Our point has always been that we should tap the potentials of electronic technology to resolve problems in our "late age of print" technology (to use Jay Bolter's terms.) That is, we would like to reflect on, say, the problems of pat-

My interest in the shift from print to electronic environments more or less coincided with my move in 1988 from Eastern Illinois University (where I taught for 9 years), to my current position in the English Department at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. With Jim's persistent prodding (and occasional cajoling), I finally set up my email account, and ever since then . . . well, to my mind it's the best antidote to Gerald Graff's articulation of "patterned isolation" that I know of. That is, collaborations like the TicToc project become possible, where before I could only hope to meet most of you through the conference circle, if we were lucky to all be at one together.

My background work in theory and pedagogy (ed., *Changing Classroom Practices*; co-ed., *Practicing Theory in Undergraduate Literature Courses*) has, to my mind, led directly to cyberspace where theory, pedagogy, and practice meet in new and challenging ways. When I first came to IUP, my interests were in institutional critique and in the cross-disciplinary exploration of the visual and the verbal (co-ed., *Image and Ideology in Modern/Postmodern Discourse*), and the political/social implications of moving towards post-discipli-

terned isolation we experience in our field coverage models of departments, and use the telecommunications networks to allow for exchanges and interactions of a more dialogical nature, etc. (Hence, E-works?) In short, we would like to access the technology to resolve our problems, to change our working conditions for the better, rather than to use the technology simply because it's there And sometimes this works wonderfully.

But sometimes it doesn't. And this is where I think of Tom's point. The exhilarating effects of cyberspace interactions can sometimes be offset by the new problems of being overwhelmed. There are just so many new demands. In the most recent issue of *Works and Days*, the Berlin Conversations, this became a heated moment of our conversations. We called it the problem of "stamina:" how do we now handle all the new demands of cyberspace when the old print demands do not let up? How can anyone respond to 7 scenarios, all of which are actually quite complex if they were to be laid out with the thick description required of digging deeper into each case study (rather than the understandably thin descriptions we received)?

So I like Gian's and Joe's idea of bringing our discussion to specific problems in the classroom. The fourth scenario is actually based on one of the three linked teleseminars Jim S. and I have team-taught, and I'll try to lay out an example drawn from our current seminar, "Cultural Studies, Cyberspace, and Postmodern-ism." In this class, we use a listserv, and Jim then uses the MonArc program to organize the threads of the class conversation into our web site (http://www.uic.-edu/~sosnoski-/whodunit/e581/-discussion.html). It's not always easy for us to talk with each other, partly because of the incredible racial/ethnic diversity of the 14 participants, partly because our subject matter is vast and elusive at times. We have to work very carefully to develop some shared terms, because our differences mean that we don't read the same articles the same way at all. I mean, we're very nice to each other, perhaps to a fault, but it remains difficult to

talk through, with, or across all our differences because we tend to lose each other in the online conversation, or talk at cross purposes. Our question is: how can we use some of the obvious advantages of the listserv and web page to aid us rather than overwhelm us with our differences? We especially confronted this problem a few weeks ago when we turned to what we thought might be a fairly straight-forward exploration of cyberspace resources: our task was to search cultural studies web sites. Each participant was asked to locate 10 web sites, and to describe each one in a listserv message. As these messages began showing up, the newness, potential, and liability of cyberspace really confronted us: 14 students, each with 10 postings in the course of the week was a bit overwhelming and the selection of sites was somewhat confusing. Despite the multiple postings, there was considerable excitement among the participants about their discoveries. The assignment was a striking instance of both the potential and the problems of academic cyberspace. Everyone began their searches, as is most often the case, by using the available search engines, (Yahoo, Alta Vista, Info Seek). When students typed in "cultural studies," they got 50,000+ hits. How can anyone begin to wade through such massive list?

Here's the problem: we were encountering a dramatic example of the contrast between, on the one hand, the relatively comforting, limited, stable, and hierarchically structured body of knowledge in the old print academic culture, and, on the other, the overwhelming open-endedness of this infinitely expandable and constantly changing hypertext. The landscape of print-based academic discourse constructs its own terrain from a relatively specialized terminology. But once we enter the web, the old organizing terms and categories seem inconsequential and inadequate because the disciplinary signposts and landmarks characteristic of academic print culture are not visible. The Web is more of an immersion experience than a linear search or tour. And one can easily get lost. As one of the CSCP participants put it: "I can hardly catch my breath in moving through the web sites. I find myself swimming in a beachless sea where the cultural waves ebb and flow." Talk about stamina!

The remarkable diversity of the cultural studies sites certainly has expanded our views of cultural studies, taking us beyond the academic definitions we had been reading. The term "cultural studies" was no longer a reference to Birmingham; it suddenly included: sites in Birmingham, Australia, Brazil, public sources, gay and lesbian rights caucuses, right-wing foundations on cultural literacy, Marxist sites outside of England, together with hits on the X-Files, techno music cults, Madonna's gender- bending, and so on.

I'm going to stop here, because I've gone on long enough, (this is another stamina test), and we are still in the process of trying to resolve this problem. Our efforts have been devoted to our immedi-

ate concerns of how to develop a shared, and informed, language of talking about cultural studies and its impact on our personal and professional lives. We are seeking resources in how to manage our own conversation. The solution we are now experimenting with is creating a kind of meta-data resource, an indexed, hyper-text linked set of our descriptions and evaluations of the sites we have located. There are, of course, selective indexes out there (many web sites are no more than hypertext-linked indexes), and there are all kinds of in-depth, specialized sites. By accident, or so it seems, our class has begun, albeit haphazardly, to produce just such a tool, and we feel it has already been useful, at least to us. So far we have seen nothing like this: there are no meta-data resources to help others locate themselves in the vast terrain of online cultural studies sites (as Joe says, we're trying to "improve/elaborate" our understanding of our findings), but we are facing all the problems of selecting appropriate categories, terms, and links. The old disciplinary terms just won't do. Although this is not a writing class, as in Gian's instance, we are clearly at the point of "trying to do something with" our talk about cultural studies by producing a web site. It is indeed "work," and the usefulness of it is most likely to emerge more from the process of its construction than with the web site itself, which will always remain open to elaboration and extension. It is clear to us that this is a local, ad hoc solution: there's no way we can "disinterestedly" produce an exhaustive index or bibliography (despite 14 people working on it) which encompasses the terrain, as traditional print bibliographies attempt to do. At least not in a part of one semester. (The editors of *Wired* magazine say there are currently about 150 million web sites; by the year 2000, they estimate there will be 2 billion.) This is not the same kind of problem we face in a traditional classroom. Anybody else faced this kind of situation? Got any suggestions?

David

Date: Tuesday, 18 March 1997
From: Thomas Philion
Subject: Response to Pagnucci and Tabbi

Gian—thanks for your post on teaching with computers; there is much here that I find myself in agreement with, especially since I myself advocate and use a workshop approach, or try to, in which students are involved in writing in class and/or discussing problems that they face at a production level. In general, I aim for "activity" in my classrooms, and I conceive writing as an important dimension of the activity (the literacy) that I aim to nurture (in addition to reading, speaking, and listening).

I do find myself feeling similar to Joe Tabbi, though, in that I resist

the notion that the work that takes place in your classroom or my own is any more "real" or "productive" or "tangible" than the work that takes place in other classrooms where student writing occurs outside of the context of classroom time, and receives much less direct attention from teachers and peers than it does in workshop contexts. I guess I believe that there are different kinds of work, and that very few teachers ever "talk" just because that is the thing to do. Most teachers, I assume, talk because they feel a need to model for their students ways of thinking about texts that they deem important and valuable (I know that I try to do this in my own classroom). Correspondingly, I suspect that when teachers invite conversation about texts (although not student-produced texts), they are again trying to involve their students in ways of thinking and talking that they deem useful, important, or valuable (and transferable to writing). My point here is that I don't feel it useful or necessary to create an opposition between classrooms that focus more on the reception of literary texts than on the production of student texts; both classrooms, it seems to me, engage in work. The questions that I think we ought to ask are, "what sort of work are we inviting in our classrooms?" and "why do we invite that sort of work?" Necessarily, I think, teachers will have different responses to these questions, and a conversation about the different work that we engage in ought to make us all aware that no one pedagogy is inherently better or more real than another; all approaches have weaknesses or blind spots, in addition to strengths and contributions.

I have a similar perspective with regard to the issue of the relationship between our teaching and the "building of a whole society." It seems to me that all teaching is aimed (even if it is not aimed directly) toward the creation of a society, or, to put this a different way, toward some sort of grounding in the material and social world (I don't buy Joe's notion that he just aims for "writing" in his classes, that this is all that is going on; upon further reflection, I think Joe would agree that his particular approach to writing in his classroom implies—perhaps indirectly—a certain vision of a society that he would like to see created, and that he hopes his students will undertake to create with him). Just like more conventional efforts to ground teaching in the material and social world, efforts to use the Internet to convey to students their connectedness to other people and their ability to re-shape the world is limited and contingent; much depends on the assumptions that students have about the Internet and the opportunities that are made available to them. In my experience, many students (like many teachers) express a profound skepticism about the relation between building a web site and "building a whole society" (I confess, I share this skepticism). They are aware, in other words, that web site building only changes the world, or builds a society, in a narrow and contingent sense. Again, my point here is that we

should not argue the superior merits of computers to make linkages amongst students between reading and writing (literacy) and social change or action; instead, we ought to ask questions about how computers can help us to create such linkages, and how they might also limit our ability to do so in relation to more conventional pedagogical approaches.

Writing this reminds me that the one feature of computer-mediated reading and writing that I admire or find interesting is the way in which computers enhance the visibility of the conversations that I am engaged in. I mean, at the end of a computer-mediated conversation, I have a text to turn to for further reflection (this is a point that Joe Tabbi makes, too, in his most recent message). Oral conversations provide me with no such written transcript. When I use computers in the context of my secondary English methods course, I ask students to share ideas in relation to literary texts using the Interchange component of DIWE; following this exchange of typed words, selected students are to review the transcripts for key questions upon which to build a coherent and conventional piece of writing. Sometimes, I distribute the Interchange transcripts for large group discussion. For me, this is one of the nicest features of teaching in computer classrooms; whatever was "said" can be consulted again and made the visible subject of continued discussion. I know that this often happens in conventional classrooms, in the sense that conversational "threads" are returned to and reflected upon, but the visibility of the computer-mediated conversation, I believe, enhances the quality of the reflection and my students' awareness of their participation in a dynamic and collaborative exchange of words and ideas.

I look forward to further talk (writing) about these subjects.

Best—

Tom

Date: Monday, 17 March 1997
From: Eric Crump
Subject: Technology's impact on composition

...or at least it aspires to manifestohood. This is the text of a presentation I gave at the recent Conference on College Composition and Communication. It seems to me to be relevant to our discussions here. It's a first draft written with previous few hours to spare before the session, but I half think first drafts are the best drafts to publish, so here goes...

New Tools, New Rools, New Fools

The new writing tools & rules we are using to construct the learn-

ing environments of the next generation university have been alternately praised as radically democratic (and therefore presumably good?) and lambasted for disappointing expectant idealists' hopes or for threatening all that's good and right in society. Hype (pro or con) has a way of coming back to haunt its users, especially inasmuch as it oversimplifies complex situations and polarizes debate. Still, hype seems the right tack to take sometimes, and so I expect the claims I make here to seem quite foolish to most of you. I mean them to be foolish, but in the best sense of the word.

Of course, hype is not the cause but the symptom. These perceptual extremes seem to be a function of the disconcerting threat to hierarchical authority structures—structures that even the most progressive and libertarian of us are quite USED to and if not comfortable with, at least comfortable with resisting—and the messy process we're in—or CAN be in, if we choose to—of reconstructing authority more laterally and complexly.

The tools that make this possible & which most of us are becoming familiar with as quickly as we can, are things like email, newsgroups, web forums, MUDs, IRC, web chats: anything that supports the unregulated conversations occurring on the net. If education really embraces the suite of tools that make up the Internet and the social rules they support (that is, the democratic assumptions and practices those tools tend to facilitate in the wild) there exists the possibility that rampant collegiality might result, and that's got people understandably nervous.

Collegiality, as I'm using it, is the situation in which the psychological distance supplied by hierarchical authority is removed or muted. In distance education environments to the point that people are able to interact as if they were peers, regardless of their conventional credentials. I should add quickly that I don't mean to suggest that differences in knowledge and skill are or should be erased—only that those differences need not be used as barriers to the productive relationships, or as rationale for sustaining hierarchic relationships.

What Internet communities have provided that educational institutions typically do not (on any significant scale) is the possibility for people to interact and pursue tasks based on mutual interest and respect rather than via the rigid channels and within the isolating compartments of the traditional university. What I hope we can talk about today are the implications that technologically supported collegiality might have on how writing teachers and students interact, how authority among them may be redistributed, on the pedagogical power and political risks those implications might contain, and on nothing less the future of writing education and education in general.

The claims I'm making are not new. Folks at this convention have been talking a good bit for the past several years about the possibilities and perils of internet technologies, and those conversations often

turn on questions of liberation (or not) and reconstruction of authority (or not). I would like to point out what I see as root of our conflicted views of the net, perhaps the fulcrum on which those "OR"s are balanced: There is a fundamental incongruity between the mature, stable, regulated environment of the classroom and the immature, unstable, unregulated environment of the net.

I'm stating the obvious again. But what's not so obvious is how we negotiate that incongruity as we simultaneously move from the classroom to the net and from the net to the classroom.

I use the term "interversity" quite a bit these days because it seems like a neat if not elegant way to describe the convergence of internet and university, serving as an emblem for the rich array of conflicts and possibilities that erupt when those two things come together.

In practice, the conditions of conflict are created when teachers and students have had time to explore the net on their own, have experienced the exhilaration of making connections with people and information that is relevant to them, have begun forming relationships and developing interesting projects in that virtual space and outside the watchful gaze of the institution. Most of us who apprehend the net as an exciting and liberatory place, whatever its traps and turmoils, tend to want to share the wealth, to invite others to join us

The problem comes when the people we invite are students in our classes at our universities. The bureaucratic institution, whatever it's good qualities as a learning environment and educational resource, has become something preoccupied with compartmentalizing, specializing, sorting, ranking, judging, with developing and protecting knowledge rather than enabling people. Most bureaucracies are like that so some extent. I like to think of bureaucracies as organisms. They're highest priority is self-preservation, not service. So if we think our bureaucratic institutions are there to help *us* become better educated, we might want to reconsider. They exist to sustain themselves in our name but not in our service. And like any organism, bureaucracies have immune systems. Change, especially change that involves a shift to a much less regulated and therefore less bureaucratic environment, is perceived as a disease.

The way to developing open, liberatory learning environments on the net but within the purview of the institution will not be easy. Worse, it may be a way that the bureaucracy will overtly and covertly attempt to sabotage or appropriate in its own defense.

There's this immense imperviousness about institutions; they seem quite unperturbed by a moderate tone and balance presentation. Thus the emergence of hyperhetoric in discussions that enter this terrain. I'm reminded of a passage in Stewart Brand's book, *Media Lab*, in which he quotes Marvin Minksy:

> Religion is a teaching machine—a little deadly loop for putting itself

in your mind and keeping it there. The main concern of a religion is to stop thinking, to suppress doubt. It's interested in solving deep problems, not in understanding them. And it's correct in a sense, because the problems it deals with don't have solutions, because they're loops. 'Who made the world?' 'God.' You're not allowed to ask, 'Who made God?'

So a certain amount of shouting and a few bold claims seem necessary. I think we have to be loud and assertive, at times, in order to be heard above the buzz of the hive. If want to find ways to make possible for us and our students to legitimately engage in the kind of productively chaotic we find on the net, we may have to get at hidden institutional agendas, petrified and obsolete structures, old beliefs and rituals. This makes us heretics, but it's ok. Hereticking can be fun. Dangerous, but fun.

So the Interversity is contested ground. The force of bureaucratic institution, with its investment in stability and consistency, versus the forces of democratic complexity, with its investment in change and instability. If we look at the oft-used frontier metaphor to describe the net, we might assume that anarchy is doomed, that civilization will assert, that bureaucracy will gain its foothold and will flourish, crowding out the weeds of liberation at a brisk pace. There's every reason to believe that will happen.

That's the main reason it's important, I think, to be aware of and appreciate and promote the kind of learning environments that happen almost spontaneously on the net and to fight for those spaces and for the kind of interaction they allow.

What if what we had was a system that allowed teachers and students to hang out together, teaching and learning by turn (blurring and shifting those roles almost whimsically), exploring and experimenting, working on projects springing from mutual interest and benefit? We'd have us a helluva powerful education system.

Sound idyllic, idealistic, unattainable? Well, we have it now, out on the net. We live in it every day, some of us. Some of us (me) would even claim to have gotten a better education in a few years hanging out on the net, talking and having fun, than in all the classrooms they've ever been in.

The fact that things don't look like that in most classrooms is not an indictment of teachers or students, necessarily (though all of us in some way help perpetuate the system that enslaves us). And it's not evidence that the idealistic portrayals of the net   are uselessly Utopian. It means we have some work to do if we want to get past this creaky, ponderous, stifling system and shape education to fit the needs of the people it is supposed to serve! Us!

Ideals are not evaluative criteria to be applied as measures of success or failure; they are calls to action. For the interversity to become more internet than university, we have to intentionally and insistently

advocate the value of open learning systems, of systems that support and enable learners rather than erecting barriers and enforcing isolation. We may have to violate some rules along the way, but keep in mind the rules of the institution are not necessarily there to serve us but to serve it. As John Mayher reminds us in his recent *College English* review: "The debate framers always win since they determine the ground rules, what counts as evidence, and what the criteria are for 'winning.'" The rules we are taught to follow are there and

The Technology Bandwagon
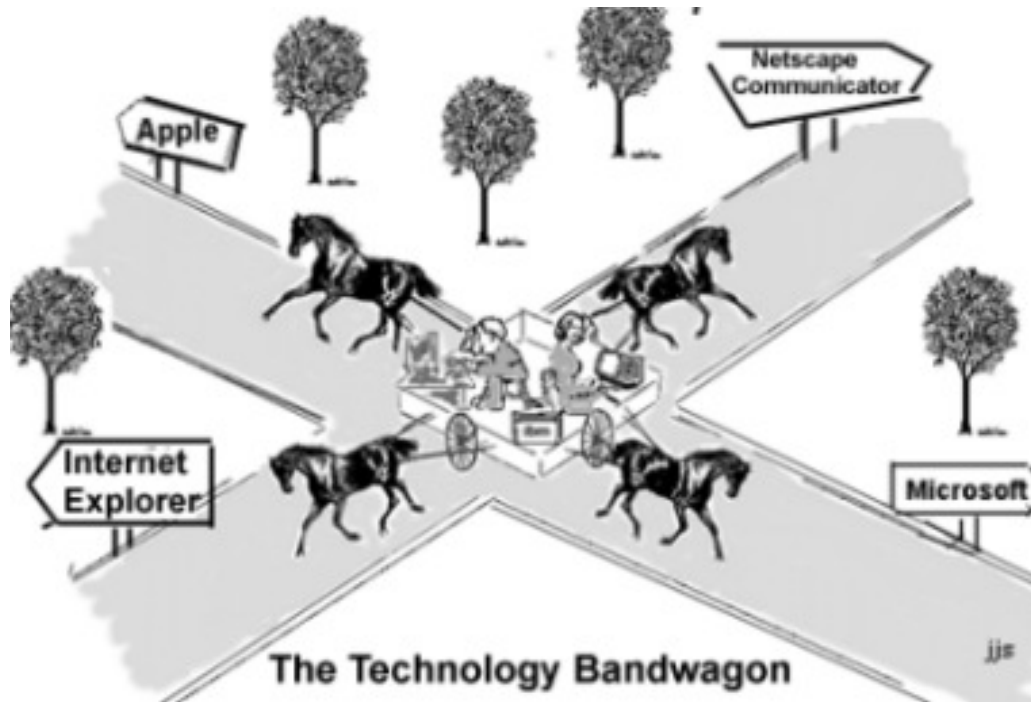
enforced specifically to prevent us from exploring new possibilities that don't fit old conditions. Violating them—ethically and with some caution—may be the only means of getting out of the box.

In practice, I think this means taking some risks, a willingness to make some semi-blind leaps and give up some of the familiar, (dis)comfortable practices that the institution wants us to think are inevitable and eternal: grading, syllabi, assignments, classrooms, classes, semesters, maybe even degrees, probably curricula. We can't get past the institution by playing its game, obeying its rules. None of those things exist, as such, on the net. If we export them there, we may be colonizing our own selves.

Joseph Harris, in his review (in the same issue of *College English*),

"Reclaiming the Public Sphere," quotes Deborah Meier:

> Teachers who believe in spelling tests every Friday or are "hooked on phonics" sneak them in, even when they're taboo. And so do those who want good books or fewer workbooks, regardless of school regulations. The braver and more conscientious cheat the most, but even the timid can't practice well what they don't believe in.

"The more conscientious cheat the most." I like that turn of phrase, because I argue that for teachers and students to thrive and build the kind of learning environments that fit what they want to do and how they want to do it, teachers and students at some point have to begin building the kind of learning environments they want to work in. Just do it, as the Nike commercials so wisely put it. And Meier's comment that we can't practice well what we don't believe may be the only rationale we need to step outside institutional constraints, leaving the door ajar so practices we believe in might begin to seep in.

I'll close by sharing an illuminating bit that was posted by Nancy Dodge to a home education list I'm on. Makes my point about the obsolescence of our system more betterly than I have.

A Horsie Story

Common advice from knowledgeable horse trainers includes the adage, "If the horse you're riding dies, get off." Seems simple enough, yet, in the education business we don't always follow that advice. Instead, we choose from an array of other alternatives which includes:

1. Buying a stronger whip.
2. Trying a new bit or bridle.
3. Switching riders.
4. Moving the horse to a new location.
5. Riding the dead horse for longer periods of time.
6. Saying things like "This is the way we've always ridden the horse."
7. Appointing a committee to study the horse.
8. Arranging to visit other sites where they ride dead horses more efficiently.
9. Increasing the standards for riding dead horses.
10. Creating a test to measure our dead horse riding ability.
11. Comparing how we're riding now to how we did ten or twenty years ago.
12. Complaining about the state of horses these days.
13. Blaming the horse's parents. The problem is often in the breeding.
14. Tightening the cinch.